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Therefore, the Mike Shane Mystery Magazine reprint "For The Good of Society," is the version that should be used for reprints. It is included in the Unpublished and Alternate Versions directory.

LIBERTY

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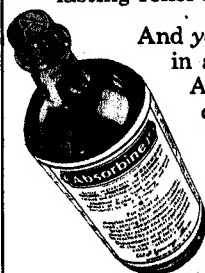
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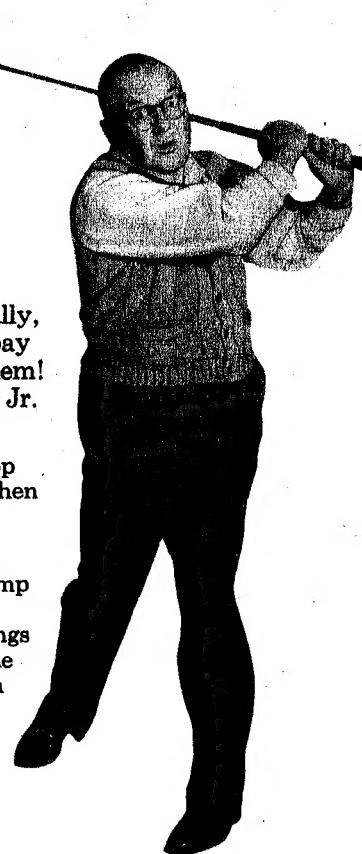
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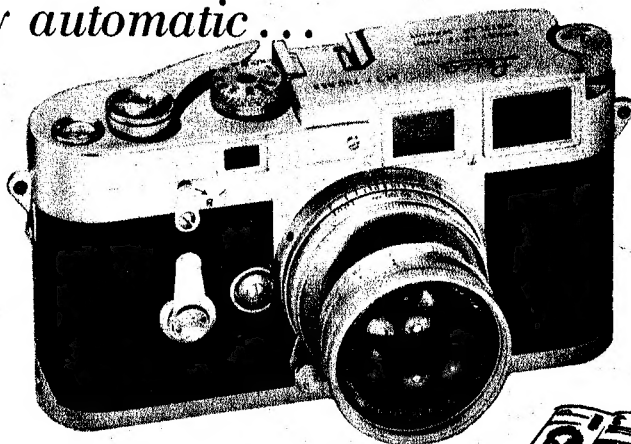
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Vancouver killer

Three guys are chopped down; \$11,000 vanishes. Who has the dough; and who is the real killer?

A LIBERTY SHORT SHORT
by JACK RITCHIE

Evans lifted his hand toward the cigaret. "What did I kill that really mattered?"

THE big car moved smoothly through the sun-splashed British Columbia countryside. Evans watched the passing scenery and he seemed to be enjoying it.

He lifted the handcuffed left hand toward the cigaret in his mouth and then decided it would be easier with the free right. He exhaled smoke. "I'm a Vancouver city boy," he said. "But this looks good to me today. I'd like to get out and walk around."

"Remember it when you try to get to sleep tonight," I said.

He put the cigaret back in his mouth and it moved as he talked. "I haven't been up to the pen for more than four years," he said. "Wonder if they made any changes."

"I'm glad you show interest," I said. "Be sure to look around and have a happy time."

He ground out the cigaret in the ash tray set into the arm rest and raised an eyebrow as he looked at me. "I'll bet you think of me as a killer."

"I had that idea," I said. "But I have a warped point of view."

"What did I kill that really mattered?"

I took my eyes away from the back of the officer driving the car. "I'd say three human beings. Or were there more I haven't heard of?"

The thin smile came to his face. "Let's leave it at three."

"I know you like talking about them," I said. "Tell me again about the first one."

"Let's call that one self-defense," he said. "Nick Walter had a great big automatic that he was going to point at me."

"Nick was medium bad," I said. "He took things that didn't belong to him. But that should mean jail, not a coffin."

Evans shrugged. "It's a point of view."

"None of it bothers you," I said. "I don't worry about it, if that's what you mean. A thousand people die every hour. Let's see your tears for them."

My eyes went back to the thick neck of the driver. "Somebody cried for them."

"Did they?" He smiled again. "Did anybody cry for Al Tomas? Maybe the wife who got terror in her eyes every time he thought of coming home? Or the parents of the high school kids Nick got into the habit of using the white powder?"

"He got it in the back, didn't he? Self-defense?"

"Let's say that it was kind of dark and I didn't know whether he was coming or going with that butcher knife. I forgot to eat my carrots at dinner and my eyesight was bad."

EVANS' right hand brought out a pack of cigarets from his coat pocket.

"But you don't really care about Walter or Tomas," he said. "It's Frankie Carmody that makes your lips so tight."

"You helped society on that one too. Is that the way you figure it? He was only 19, but you read into the future and you could see where he was going."

"What do you think? He had a record that began getting monotonous by the time he was 16."

"I'm wondering about the money," I said. "The company claimed there was 15 grand in that safe. Four thousand was all anybody found in Frankie's satchel."

Evans smiled. "Bad bookkeeping. Or one of the boys in the firm was cheating."

"I hope you hid it good," I said. "You must have had 10 minutes before I came down from the roof and joined you."

He clucked his tongue. "Now you've got the idea that I'm a crook."

"Will you ever get a chance to spend it? There'll be a lot of eyes on you from now on."

The big car turned off the main highway onto the dirt road leading to the B.C. prison.

Evans' eyes surveyed me. "You're lucky," he said. "I had bad thoughts in my mind for you."

I looked at the walls looming up ahead. "But by that time there were too many other people around. You could think up a story to explain about Frankie, because there was no one around when it happened. But you had to forget the gun when I came in with company."

The car paused at the gates and then shot through as they opened.

"I like seeing people like you dead," Evans said. "But it looks like you're safe for now."

The car stopped and we got out and entered the Administration building. The uniformed cop carried the brown envelope with the records.

We went up the stairs to the receiving desk where a guard sergeant raised his eyes when he saw us and grinned. "It's been some time," he said. "Tickled to see you again, Killer."

I looked at Evans. "They know you."

"I don't mind the word," he said. "I'm not sensitive."

After the handcuffs were off, Evans massaged his wrist for a little while. Then he put one hand on my back and shoved me closer to the desk.

"Well, he's all yours now," he said. "I brought him in standing up, and it makes me miserable. See that life is unpleasant for him. I want him to think that his brother Frankie Carmody was the lucky one." ♦ ♦